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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

A SYMPOSIUM
BY
LEADING WRITERS
AND THINKERS

IN MEMORIAM
Charles Josselyn

A Symposium by Leading Writers and Thinkers

"What happens after death?" is the most personal question there is, and this symposium from some of the most thoughtful and influential men of the day should add light to what is, perhaps, the greatest problem of all ages and the most vital. Opinions vary greatly, as the following titles show.

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The Biblical View - - - - *Rev. Dinsdale T. Young*

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

A SYMPOSIUM *By*
LEADING WRITERS
AND THINKERS

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK and LONDON
1916

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In Memoriam

Charles [illegible].

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FOREWORD

"WHAT happens after death?" is, of course, the most painfully personal question there is. A great many matters of controversy may interest us without vitally concerning us individually, but, after all, every one of us has, at some time or other, to face death, and it is inevitable that the question of the hereafter should have a fascination at once peculiar and painful.

To-day millions of brave men on the long-drawn-out battle fronts are face to face with the prospect of sudden death, and both to them and to those near and dear to them, the old, old problem of the future life has suddenly become urgent and acute.

This little book does not pretend to give a dogmatic and exhaustive reply to the question "After Death—What?" Fifty years ago the reply, both of orthodox upholders of faith, and those who did not believe in the survival after death, would have been much more precise, and

much more emphatic. To-day there is far less tendency among the champions of faith to be dogmatically certain, and, on the other hand, there is far greater tendency among scientists to regard the question as one worthy of their scientific treatment.

The opinions gathered together in this little book arose out of a newspaper discussion conducted recently, a discussion which aroused such extraordinary interest that it was felt the articles ought to be brought together and supplemented in this more permanent form.

Naturally, being a symposium of men of widely different schools of thought, there is often considerable diversity in the views expressed, but it is felt that this very freedom of discussion and variety of expression will be a help rather than a hindrance to all those who want to form their own opinion on a subject necessarily vague, but always vital.

account for all these shadows, and that from their united lispings or sighs, inarticulate as they were and inconclusive in detail, heard possibly only by the expectant ear, there yet came with some distinctness a resultant voice that never muttered of death and nothingness, but always heartened man with a song that spoke of life and love and light; life indomitable, love progressive, in light ineffable for ever and for aye.

DO WE CEASE TO LIVE AT DEATH?

By the Rev. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

"Do we cease to live at death?" Naturally if we cease to live when we die, there can be no effective argument or evidence to show that we should live again in this world or in any other.

The personality would have ceased to be, and when it has once ceased to be, a resuscitation would be simply a new creation, and that new creation would not be the person that had lived before.

It is this that makes the argument for reincarnation so unsatisfying when you come to reflect upon it. The reincarnated life has no conscious or moral connection with its former experience, and consequently the supposed judgment in the renewed life has no shadow of justice; the reward is not deserved if the reincarnation is a favourable one, nor is the punishment deserved if the reverse.

The question, therefore, that confronts humanity, and has confronted it since the earliest records of human life upon this planet, is whether the death of the body involves the dissolution of personality.

What Happens After Death?

Now putting aside for a moment the powerful argument which is derived from the Christian fact of the resurrection and looking simply at the argument of natural religion, we can certainly marshal an immense weight of evidence to show that the soul is not involved in the destruction of the body.

Take, for example, the Phædon of Plato—that immortal description of Socrates arguing for his immortality as the hemlock poison worked and death crept up from his feet to his heart. It is true that the formal arguments advanced in that great piece of literature may not carry conviction, but behind those arguments which were relative only to that time and that world of thought in which Socrates lived, there is the indubitable fact that Socrates died in that way, and faced death with the cheerful confidence that he himself would escape from the perishing body and that his persecutors and judges would not be able to capture the soul in its flight.

Consequently his last command to his friends was to offer a cock to Æsculapius, the god of healing, because he felt that when the body should lie still and cold in death he himself would be whole and more utterly alive than he had been when he inhabited the body.

It may, however, be said that the conviction of Socrates carries no more weight than the con-

viction of the modern man of science, who carefully assures us that he has no expectation of a future life and no desire for it.

But let us look at that argument for a moment. Is the personal conviction of a mind and character like Socrates of no more intrinsic value than the personal conviction of a man who expects to cease to be directly a cup of poison or some other accident arrests the functions of his body? Instinctively you reply that the personality of Socrates is incalculably greater and more significant than the personality of this poor materialist whose life is a mere breath, a shadow, that passes immediately away.

And why is the personality of Socrates impressing the world to-day, after more than 2,000 years?

The answer simply is, because of his immovable conviction about his surviving death—a conviction which gives to his life and to all that he said and did a depth and a meaning which never has ceased to affect mankind.

On the other hand, the man who from any cause has surrendered the belief in a life to come dwindles and withers so that his personality becomes intrinsically insignificant, useless to the world as it is, and, of course, useless to himself.

But now what does this mean? If we turn from the individual to the whole body of human beings that are living to-day upon the globe the

same argument immediately applies. The human race derives its significance, its value, entirely from its beliefs in a life that goes beyond any conscious earthly life.

Just so far as the race surrenders the faith in immortality which has been its appanage from the beginning, it dwindles and withers—it feels that it can give no account of itself. The possibilities of some terrestrial paradise or some indefinite improvement of the material conditions of life offer no sufficient reason for the deeper instincts and supports of the race.

If it attempts to picture to itself the ultimate condition of human society when all the present evils are removed and universal health and well-being are secured, it is immediately paralysed by the thought, "But what does that matter? And what has been achieved if all of the individuals which compose the race are simply passing away into nothingness like the autumnal leaves when the winter approaches?"

The argument, therefore, is much stronger than it appears at the outset, because it involves not only the individual life but the life of the race. The one intolerable thing for the race is that life should lose its significance and should sink back into the mere animal functions of nutrition and procreation, and significance cannot be given to life upon this planet so far as that life develops into that greatest of earthly

phenomena, personality, unless to personality can be attributed the quality of continuance.

It may, of course, be said that this quality can be secured and this significance can be given to the life of the race if the selected individuals, the "supermen" as they would be called to-day, may secure continuance while the large mass of undistinguished and futile lives pass away into nothingness, and from a purely philosophical point of view that argument may be valid. But against it rises up all the sense of pity and consideration for even the lowest of human beings which we have learned from Christianity.

It is Christ's unique service to mankind that He taught us to see the greatness and absolute worth of even the most insignificant human soul. And in that way, by another line of argument, the certainty that some human beings must survive death is changed into a whole confidence that all human beings who are in any true sense personalities, continue and move on to reap the fruits of their life on earth in a life under new and perhaps more hopeful conditions.

Even the most sceptical and disappointed human heart that is touched by pity and love will write as its own epitaph, "A little trust that when we die we reap our sowing, and so good-bye!"

SHALL WE LIVE AGAIN?

By the Rev. A. J. WALDRON

THIS is the eternal question, as old as death. It is, and ever will be, the problem of religion, science, and philosophy. The borderland between "the living" and "the not living" is the Waterloo of science.

The great question is: What proof have we of life beyond the grave? I dare assert that the proof is so clear as almost to amount to mathematical certainty.

Take, for instance, the enormous amount of evidence furnished by the phenomena of psychical research; read what Sir Oliver Lodge has written in "The Destiny of Man"; weigh over the names of men like Dr. Barrett, F. W. Myers, Prof. Sidgwick, Dr. Hodgson, Camille Flammarion, A. J. Balfour, and a host of others. I am quite aware that the history of spiritualism contains innumerable stories of fraud, illusion, delusion, etc., but when you have finished your criticism you are still left with a residuum of fact, which baffles solution except you admit that there is striking evidence of communication between what we call "the living and the dead."

What Happens After Death?

I have studied spiritualism for twenty years; I do not think there is a book worth reading on the subject which I have not carefully studied. I have debated with some of the most eminent mediums, and I have studied the question in séance, and I have been forced to the conclusion that there is a residuum of fact which can only be explained on the spiritualistic hypothesis.

But when the person is dead and you bury the body, what becomes of the life, the human ego, this atom of force, that used the body, that played its divine harmony in the brain cells?

If it goes into space or a spiritual sphere, how can it act without a medium, for we know that on this plane the phenomenon of human life depends on a physical organism? Not so fast, please. The old chemistry, it is true, said the line of communication between the tips of the finger and the brain was a chain of atoms, atom conveying impression to atom and on and on to the brain, and there read off by that mysterious thing called consciousness. That chemistry is out of date. We know now by established fact the medium of communication is not gross matter, but ether. We send messages without wires—wireless telegraphy—it passes through oceans, mountains; nothing can stop it.

What is the medium? Ether. What is

ether? It is not matter; it fills stellar space, it fills molecular space, it is not subject to gravitation. It is a third something, neither matter nor force.

Don't you remember that an old sage called Paul wrote, "You will be buried with a corruptible body, and you will rise with an incorruptible body. There is a natural body and a spiritual body"? It seems to me that Paul anticipated modern science in that inspired passage. At least, ether shows us we have two bodies; one, the gross material fit for this planet, and another which no closed doors or windows can shut in. You have got the spiritual body now, and that body which, at last, science has put its finger on, is to my mind the spiritual body which will be used by the ego in that spiritual world for personal manifestation.

The verdict of history? Look where you will see the phenomena of religion, religion that spells three things—God, the soul, and immortality. The doctrine of immortality is at the back of all Egyptian history; it built the Pyramids, decorated the tombs, wrote the "Book of the Dead," founded Thebes, and gave the first poets their songs, and runs its golden weft through all its literature.

It is the same everywhere; unlock the mysterious cuneiform reading on the clay tablets of Assyria, Babylon, and Chaldea, and there is

practically only one message—life beyond the grave.

Is there anything to match this? Tell me this instinct for immortality is a nightmare, an excrescence bred of ignorance. I reply that here is a greater miracle than the one you displace. The law of correspondence is broken. No; when I find a fossil, and on it I find fossil fins, I rightly infer that the fossil was once a fish, and there must have been water to match it, correspond with it. The eye, with its coats, humours, lens, and retina, is impossible without light to match it; the bird, with its wings beautifully formed, must have air with buoyancy to match it. So when I find this instinct for immortality as universal as language, as old as human thought, as real as consciousness, as deep as human needs, and as high as human aspiration, I reply it seems to me it must have life beyond to match it, to equalise it, to make the music plain, and fill the earth with law, and the universe with justice.

We believe in justice; we believe in hope; but if there is no future life, there can be no justice in the universe. The girl dies outraged in the gutter, the betrayer goes free, the scales are never adjusted.

I believe in God, because I believe in justice, in love, and in hope. I believe there is something in the universe which must match

alien, vapid, the immortality of which can have no more meaning and interest for our conscious Ego than the indestructibility of the atoms composing our mortal body. What value, what interest can an immortality have for me in which I should no longer love what I have loved, no longer hate what I have hated, no longer remember my past life, my small and great adventures, my moments of joy and my days of sorrow, my sweet and my bitter emotions, my ambitions, my yearnings, my disappointments, my pains, and my consolations—in one word, all that composed that personality the preservation of which seemed so hugely important to me? In this case it is not me that survives, the immortality of this alien soul is not my immortality and does not concern me in any way.

But the first alternative is still far worse. Suppose my immortal soul would really be my conscious Ego, all the essentials of my personality surviving the death of my body. It would remain connected with everything that was dear to me, it would preserve all my feelings. Now, think of this: Reduced to the state of a soul without organs, without means for exercising the slightest action on the material world, I would see my child weep and would be unable to comfort it; I would accompany her life, watch it in every moment, witness her distress, her pains, her dangers, her despair, and I

would be incapable of aiding her, helping her, protecting her, defending her, encouraging her. Why, this would be a fiendish torture, worse than all the torments attributed to hell! Why, annihilation would be an inestimable blessing compared with this existence of a feeling but paralytic soul, impotent witness of all sufferings, a prisoner, fettered and gagged, shut in in its eternity and deprived of all possibility to communicate with all that it loves more than itself.

Let us go one step farther.

My Ego is composed of certain definite notions or conceptions. The contents of its consciousness are the world which it knows, are the beings which have always surrounded it. Now eternity means a rather long time. All that I know, all that I love, all that concerns or interests me in any way, will have disappeared, say, in a couple of centuries. In two thousand years, perhaps, not even my nation will exist any longer. What interest, this globe of ours, shall it then offer to me? What will be the contents of that immortality which is so fervently wished for? The soul will have to fill itself with other, new interests which I cannot guess. But in this case again the soul will not be my soul, mine Ego.

No. The immortality of the personality is neither conceivable nor desirable. Nothingness is more consoling. And all one ought to desire

is a death which does not come prematurely, but at the precise hour when one has accomplished all one's tasks and completed the circle of the vital obligations. Such a death—this is my innermost conviction—can have no terror for anybody.

AFTER DEATH—WHAT?

By T. CLAYE SHAW, M.D., F.R.C.P.

IT is pure speculation to indulge in ideas and statements on this subject. Neither the Archbishops nor the Pope can tell us anything more than we know ourselves, and that is that we know nothing. We do not even know what life is, and all that we can prove is that under certain circumstances the body can perform acts and is capable of showing what we call mental phenomena, and that under others it is incapable of these demonstrations and falls into a desolation, a decomposition, which we call death, and this we say is a sign of having lost something which we call life, which was before associated with it. Except through the body, we cannot increase, diminish, or control life, because it is only a hypothesis that there is such a thing, or that it can have a separate existence.

What we do is to follow authority, to believe that there is a future existence for what is called the "spiritual life," because we are told to do so by certain people who have recorded their experience of being the witnesses of certain

marvellous and miraculous events which happened many years ago.

I cannot think that the events connected with the death and resurrection of Christ, as recorded, are mere imaginings or delusions or lies by ingenious persons, and I find no more difficulty in believing them than I have in understanding how it is that radium splits up into helion and niton, or that two gases like oxygen and hydrogen can be made to form water. I have elsewhere shown that theories of ghosts are merely the result of subjective conditions during life, and do not in any way represent life or spirit apart from the body; but I am not going to deny that there is a connection between the death of the body and the further existence in some form of that which constituted the living body, simply because, whilst, to some degree, I understand the body, I have yet not the least conception of the nature of the other.

The nature of a future life may be altogether different from what we can imagine; in fact, we have no clue of any sort as to its real form, and the material realisations of pure happiness which are held out by the exponents of various creeds are simply devices for tempting into their ranks all those whose idea of reward for self-denial and privation on earth is pleasure in a future state, whilst the penalty for transgressing certain other lines of conduct is eternal torture in

another world, there being all the time no proof of there being another world.

All who believe in the Bible must believe in the existence of another state after bodily death. The fact is there affirmed, though there is no declaration of its nature, and those who refuse to be guided by the Bible and who declare their view of "after death—nothingness," must be left to their own guidance and the temporal laws of the country.

A reasonable follower of the Bible is not likely to go wrong. He has a code of high morality laid down for him; but there is no reason for saying that an atheist or an agnostic is unable or unfit to be a good member of society. It is quite conceivable that a man who has no religion may be a most excellent citizen, and even a distinguished man in his avocation, because he is capable of seeing that pains and penalties await any infraction of the social code, but as to what is to happen to him hereafter, he must be left to his own isolation; for just as he cannot prove that there is no future state, so are we unable to prove either that there is a future state or the nature of it.

The holding of the idea of a future state is a comfort to many. It gives the support of working in a certain way for a future reward. It may be a poor purpose, this working for reward and against punishment, but it appeals to many,

and is doubtless a great determining factor in critical circumstances. Why, then, interfere with it? There is as much "intellect" in believing in a future state as there is in denying one; but as to the kind of thing a future state is, no conception is more than guesswork.

Would it be uncharitable to hope that those who desire nothingness will get it, and that those who regulate their conduct during life in accordance with the view that they are to fit themselves for a future existence may reap the fruit of their belief in a way they deserve? Whether there be a future existence or not, he may be a happy man who lives up to a good ideal, who is careful of himself and does his best to help his neighbours.

This is rather a paltry, empty creed, but it is all that the self-sufficient person can claim. The strong man, rejoicing in his strength, may be content with things as they are, but he is a stronger man who calculates upon a future existence, because, connecting his future state with his present bodily conduct, he is more likely to be careful of the latter in order to ensure a greater perfection in the former, whatever the nature of it may be.

OUR CHANCE OF IMMORTALITY

By the late Monsignor ROBERT HUGH BENSON

ON purely natural grounds—apart, that is to say, from the revelation that God has made to man on the subject—perhaps the strongest argument for the immortality of the individual soul is the ineradicable instinct of moral responsibility.

It is surely utterly impossible to explain away this deep conviction, felt by every normal person, that each man is himself responsible for his past, and will have to face the results of his past actions, by the theory that it is no more than a kind of inherited social instinct. How, therefore, unless personal identity be preserved, can this conviction be justified?

A second reason, again drawn from experience quite apart from revelation, for believing in personal immortality may be found in the argument from love.

Human love is, by common consent, the most sublime of human emotions; the relationships we form in this life are not only sacred, but fundamental; and it is their deepest

characteristic that they demand continuance. The love of friends, the love between parents and children—these things cannot be explained away, as materialist philosophers sometimes pretend to explain away the love between husband and wife, as merely physical in their origin and end. Yet, if personal immortality be a dream only, these profound emotions and relationships are completely deceptive. For in their very essence they demand permanence and eternal renewal.

A third natural argument for personal immortality is slowly emerging from the researches of psychologists. These are beginning to establish the fact that in the hour of dissolution, when mortal faculties are beginning to fail, and the senses become obscured, certain activities—and those emphatically not such activities as may be compared to the leap of a dying candle flame—begin to reveal themselves.

It is, for example, entirely accepted by all who have given thought to the subject, whether by personal investigation or by the study of evidence, that at or about the time of death examples continually and frequently take place of what is known as "telepathic communication" between the dying person and those with whom he is in mental sympathy.

Many theories have been formed on the subject, but at least there emerges from them all

the solid fact that certain of the deepest faculties of man, so far from sharing in the dissolution and failure that accompany the death of the body, are actually released by such dissolution into an activity never before experienced.

What conclusion can be drawn from these facts except that the mortality is not entire—that the deepest identity of a man, that is to say, can energise and exist apart from his body?

For Christians, of course, the question is settled. It is quite impossible for anyone who accepts the Resurrection of Christ as a fact to be content with vague doctrines of "absorption into the Soul of the World," or of that Pantheism towards which the non-Christian thought of the present day is so rapidly moving.

of the writers in this book, "Death means final extinction of consciousness," but faith in what lies beyond this present world of sights and sounds is with me a vital part of self-consciousness. "I know," said the Patriarch of old, "that my Redeemer liveth . . . and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Is not the experience expressed in those all-familiar words a part of every man's self-consciousness? In the case of this man Job, his primal belief concerning physical death was not the result of any argument, but it was a part of his rational and conscious life. He could not get away from it. I doubt if any man is actually able to rid himself completely of this belief. Dr. Max Nordau himself, seems to me to admit this consciousness of the "Hereafter" when he bemoans the fact that men shrink back from the notion of "Nothingness after Death." To him it is a piteous spectacle to see men "desperately clinging to the fond self-deception of a continuation of some sort of life after death." But the fact remains that throughout the ages there has been such a spectacle. "Looking at the religion of the lower races as a whole," says Dr. Tylor in his "Primitive Culture," "we shall at least not be ill-advised in taking as one of the general and principal elements the doctrine of the soul's

future life." This is a statement that seems to be beyond dispute. The answer of all the ages is not "Nothing," but "Something" after Death.

Even the pagan attitude was affirmative rather than negative. The philosophy of the king's counsellor in the court of the old Saxon dynasty is very suggestive of this. It is told in connection with the narrative of the conversion of King Edward of Northumbria, according to the historian. When missionaries of Augustine came and waited before the Saxon monarch and his lords, they were at first inclined to repudiate them and their doctrine. At last one of the counsellors arose and said: "Thou knowest, O King, that ofttimes on a winter's night, when we are assembled within this dimly lighted hall to do business, a swallow will come from the night, pass from darkness into darkness again. So it is with the human soul. We come we know not whence, and we go we know not whither. If, therefore, these new teachers can tell us aught concerning whence we come and whither we go, let us hear them."

"Final extinction of consciousness" was evidently not acceptable even in pagan belief.

Of course, a man may set himself against all such beliefs in the "Hereafter." He may make believe not to believe, but he does not thereby rid himself of this universal conscious-

ness. His rational self wars against his unbelief. His attitude of unbelief is not only un-Biblical, but wholly unphilosophical as well.

Socrates, when asked where he would choose to be buried, made reply: "Bury me where you will, if you can catch me." There you have the wisdom of the wisest of ancient philosophers. Like Job of old, he declined to entertain the conception that "Death was the extinction of consciousness." *Though after the flesh worms destroy the body* was a fact present to the mind of Socrates as well as to that of Job. But he did not infer from it that there was "Nothingness after Death."

To my mind it is not only utterly un-Biblical and unphilosophical, but also irrational to give Death the importance in life that is involved in the denial of the "Hereafter." Doubtless Death is a crisis in so far as it involves change and transition. But it surely is not the last law of life. "The maid sleepeth," said our Lord Jesus Christ. Could any view be more delightfully suggestive?

"Is immortality really something so ardently to be yearned after?" says Dr. Nordau.

In answer to that, I can only say for myself it is the most ardent desire of my life.

When we formulate our doctrine concerning the "Hereafter" it is not of ourselves alone we must think, but of those who love us. "Lead,

kindly light," is a bewildering hymn to me, but I shall never cease to bless the writer of it if only for those lines:

"And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile."

Take away this hope of the "Hereafter," and what is left for us but despair? As the Apostle says: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." But that is a philosophy that cuts the nerve of every noble effort and heroic achievement in life. We may as well write "Ichabod" over the national life if this belief is to prevail. I recently had the privilege of addressing an audience of working men on the subject of "Self-culture," and at the close one who was present declared that he did not consider the subject had any meaning for him, inasmuch as he believed in "the extinction of consciousness after Death." I replied that I quite endorsed his view. To my mind, as to his, it seemed unnecessary to consider the question of *self-culture* if a man regarded himself as nothing better than the brute that perisheth.

THE FAMILIAR UNKNOWN

By A. P. SINNETT, the well-known Occultist

To everyone who may, like myself, have been for half a long lifetime in familiar touch with those conditions of human life lying beyond the change commonly called death, there is something inexpressibly ludicrous in the grave discussion presented in this little book as to whether there is or is not any continuity of consciousness for us after we have each done with our respective physical bodies. The matter has nothing to do with opinions or arguments. For vast multitudes all over the civilised world the continuity of life in the case of friends who have passed on—the invariable operation of the laws which govern the immediate future—is personal knowledge gained by the exercise of faculties of superphysical sense which, though not yet exercised by all, are so frequently available that all who have enough intelligence to do so can profit by them. One of the writers says: "Physical science can have nothing to do with the question one way or the other, as consciousness lies beyond its domain." True, as the words stand, but leave out the word "physical,"

and the statement is grotesquely untrue. Superphysical science is just as scientific as that which relates merely to the low aspects of natural law, and Dr. Max Nordau's comic impudence in describing as "a vain and inane delusion" what multitudes of better-informed people know from their own experience to be a fact, reminds me of what Sir Oliver Lodge somewhere once wrote, to the effect that in these days an expression of "disbelief" in clairvoyance was not so much a declaration of opinion as an exhibition of ignorance.

The subject of what happens after death need no longer be concerned with arguments based on reason, though these are overwhelmingly in favour of continued life in worlds beyond the physical, since we have definite testimony to work with from the large numbers who now, as human evolution goes on, are exercising the superphysical senses to which the phenomena of the next world are as apparent as those of this one to the limited comprehension of people like Dr. Max Nordau.

To begin with, in the middle of the last century superior wisdom guiding the evolution of human intelligence started Spiritualism to give the current generation proof of a kind it could understand that there was a life after this, and another plane of consciousness. Millions availed themselves of the opportunities afforded,

and other millions were silly enough to think that because a fringe of imposture gathered round the manifestation, there was no reality within the fringe. But Spiritualism was not designed to do more than establish the broad fact. Later developments led to the expansion of Occult Science, which showed how it was possible to range the next plane of existence while still in the body, and bring back definite information. A vast envelope of subtle matter surrounds this earth. Physical senses cannot apprehend it, but finer senses rapidly developing among us do. That is the next world in which we all of us first awaken after shedding the physical vehicle of consciousness, and all who are earnest in pursuit of knowledge will find abundant satisfaction in the literature of Theosophy, which has grown to such magnificent proportions during the last thirty years.

Life "beyond the grave," to use an old-fashioned phrase, is much more certain than life beyond the Channel for all crossing over from Dover to Calais, and many of us know much more about it than the untravelled majority know about France. But to go into detail it is necessary to write books (as I have done several times), not merely to contribute a few remarks to a controversy which ought to be regarded as no less out of date than a dispute as to whether the earth is round or flat.

MY BELIEF

By ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER,
the well-known Authoress

My belief as to the future state is summed up in the last verse of Richard Baxter's perfect hymn:

"My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him."

That is all I have to go upon; and it is enough.

THE UNDYING SOUL

By the Rev. A. C. DIXON, B.A., D.D. (of the Metropolitan Tabernacle)

DOES the invisible part of man continue to exist after the visible part has turned to dust? Every man is his body plus something more, and the something more is greater than his body. Without any fine-spun definitions we will consider the soul as meaning that part of us which thinks, loves, rejoices, suffers, approves the right and condemns the wrong.

Ralph Wells, in defining the soul to a class of ragged children, said, "The soul is that which thinks, loves and feels." "Yes," said a little ragged girl, "and aches so." There are times when the soul does ache, and there are times when it mounts up on wings of joy.

The immortality of the soul is, first of all, suggested by Nature. We plant a seed in the springtime, and in autumn we reap the same kind of seed. The thing that continues in the seed is the vital force, the life. The particles may be different, but the life is the same. Take out the life, and it is all dead matter. The re-appearance of this life in bud and leaf and flower

at least suggests that the life mental, moral, and spiritual in us may continue after death.

The fact that the soul is not seen is no proof against its existence, but rather presumption in favour of its continuance, for there is no microscope which has yet revealed to the eye the life of the seed.

It is said that while Dr. James Armstrong was preaching on the immortality of the soul, an atheistic physician rose and asked him if he had ever seen the soul. "No," replied Armstrong, "I have never seen a soul."

The physician continued, "Did you ever hear a soul?"

"No."

"Did you ever taste a soul?"

"No."

"Did you ever smell a soul?"

"No."

"Did you ever feel a soul?"

"Yes, thank God," replied the pious preacher.

"Well," said the physician, "there are four of the five senses against one that there is a soul."

Dr. Armstrong then asked, "Did you ever see a pain?"

The physician had to confess, "No."

"Did you ever hear a pain?"

"No."

"Did you ever taste a pain?"

"No."

"Did you ever smell a pain?"

"No."

"Well, then, there are four senses against one that there is pain, and yet you know there is pain. So I know there is a soul."

The preacher might have asked the doctor, "Did you ever see your brain, or smell your brain, or taste your brain, or hear your brain?"

"No."

"Well, there are four senses against one that you have any brain." The invisible part of us is the real part. The unseen is the eternal. The body is the casket which holds the jewel of the soul.

Again, the immortality of the soul is taught by universal consciousness. The rude savage believes in a future state. The Indian buries with his comrade the blanket, the bow and arrow, believing that he will need these things in the happy hunting grounds of the future. Even modern infidelity does not deny it. When the champion blasphemer of America stood over the corpse of his brother, he spoke of the star of hope which the soul sees in the night. The heart is sometimes wiser than the head.

In order to express his hostility to Christianity, one may in a moment of weakness de-

clare that he expects to die like a dog, and that will be the last of him; but if you were to look into his face and tell him that you believe there is nothing in him higher than you find in the dog, he would be insulted. And yet if he continues to assert that he does not belong to a higher grade than the dog, he is apt to degenerate into a dog-like character.

Mr. Spurgeon tells of an English pastor who, after he had preached on the immortality of the soul, was approached by one of his parishioners, who told him that he did not believe in the teaching of his sermon. "There is no difference," he said, "between the man and the dog."

"Well," replied the preacher, "I really thought that I was furnishing food for people who had souls; if I had known that there was a dog among them, I might have brought bones for him." The man did not enjoy this personal and practical application of his own admission.

Suggested by Nature, taught by universal consciousness, the immortality of the soul is confirmed by observation. If you will turn to any first-class book on mental philosophy, you will find instances in which memory has grown stronger while the body has grown weaker. There are cases on record where page after page in foreign languages, long forgotten, have been repeated by men on beds of sickness. A

friend told me that, when he was thrown from a horse and almost killed, the panorama of his past life came before him; impressions that had faded from memory, while he was physically strong, were revived during the time of weakness.

So imagination is sometimes most brilliant when the body is weakest. I have known at least two or three men whose reason was as vigorous just a moment before they died as it ever was in their days of physical strength.

If you have ever been in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, and stood over the River Styx, you will remember that it disappears under the cavern walls. Up to the very point of disappearance the current is swift. Is there a man on earth foolish enough to suppose that there is no river after the swift current has disappeared? Does he not believe, with a conviction that amounts to certainty, that the river, though hidden, continues to flow on? And when up to the point of dying we find memory, imagination, reason, love and conscience as strong, if not stronger, than ever before, is there not a presumption which amounts to a conviction of certainty that these faculties of the soul will continue to live after the body dies? In fact, that the memory is sometimes strongest when the body is weakest goes rather to suggest that the body is a weight which the memory has to

carry, and when it gets rid of the body memory will assert its full strength.

The immortality of the soul, suggested by Nature, taught by universal consciousness, and confirmed by observation, is finally established by revelation. The words "immortal" and "immortality" occur six times in the Bible. They are two words in the Greek, one of which means "incorruptible" and the other "deathless." The word meaning "incorruptible" is applied to God Himself in 1 Tim. i. 17, and is so translated by the revisers. In Rom. ii. 7 are the words, "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." The revision correctly renders it "incorruption," which we are to seek diligently.

The word which means "deathlessness" occurs in 1 Tim. vi. 16, and refers to the Lord Jesus, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." The Deity of Jesus, dwelling in this unapproachable light, cannot die. He took upon Him the humanity which could die, but His Deity is deathlessness.

This Scripture does not even intimate that wicked men will cease to exist after death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." God cannot die and live again, but man can.

What Happens After Death?

The difference between immortality and eternal life is clearly intimated in these Scriptures. Immortality means everlasting existence, but eternal life is not eternal existence. Dead things exist. I can imagine a piece of steel existing a million years, but after the million years have passed it will be as dead as it is now. Corpses exist. Men dead in trespasses and in sins on this side of the grave exist, and they will exist after death. One does not begin really to live until he has accepted Christ; but he exists.

Eternal life is a present possession, not a future continuity. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Write the little word HATH in capital letters, for eternal life is in the present tense. It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Immortality was imparted when God created man in His own image. Sin brought death, which is separation from God, but it did not bring non-existence. Man continued to exist after he had sinned. To say that the words "perish," "die," "destruction" mean annihilation is to speak unscripturally and unscientifically. Science knows no annihilation; it simply recognises changes of form and substance. Death does not bring about annihilation of the body. We keep it several days after death, and tenderly lay it away beneath the flowers.

What Happens After Death?

Separation from God, Who is the source of life, is the death of the soul in time and eternity. Hence we are told in 2 Thess. i. 9 that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.) it is made plain that reason, memory and imagination continue to exist after the death of the body. The rich man in Hades uses the word "therefore"; he reasons. Abraham said to him, "Son, remember." And his request that Lazarus shall be sent back to earth, to rise from the dead and startle his brethren into repentance, shows that imagination still exists. This testimony of Jesus that the reason, memory and imagination of the wicked continue to exist after death is final, and settles the question once for all.

THE MISBELIEFS OF RELIGION

By Sir HIRAM S. MAXIM, C.E., M.E.

THERE is not one little particle of evidence to show that we live after we die, in the sense that preachers would have us believe.

Mankind, like all other animals and plants, has been developed into his present condition by natural selection and the survival of the fittest for the environment in which he finds himself. Small changes in body and brain, going on for vast periods of time, have produced the man of to-day, but it should not be supposed that these changes and developments have stopped. Important changes are now taking place in the brain of man; he is developing his thinking powers, and as time goes on he will waste less of his time and money in propitiating and making peace with the unseen phantoms of the air. It certainly is not difficult for us to understand that the man who thought the most of his life, and had the greatest dread of death, especially in the early ages, would be the one who stood the best chance of surviving and of propagating his species—that is, men like himself.

Man's passionate love of women and chil-

dren, and his horror of death, became intensified as time went on. He could not bear the idea that death was the end of all. "The wish was the father of the thought." In human affairs, wherever a great want manifests itself, a remedy is sure to be forthcoming, and in this case the quack doctor of religion appeared on the scene. He was quite ready to deal out everlasting life and happiness in another world after death for a consideration, and at the same time to consign those who refused to take his medicine and pay for it to everlasting torments of the most excruciating description in a fire and brimstone hell.

As ages passed, other doctors of religion modified and elaborated their doctrines, until an extremely complicated and contradictory system was evolved—a religion so extremely ridiculous and impossible that it required a lot of faith to believe it. The result was that thinking men of intelligence could not accept the foolish and absurd dogmas of the priests.

This was a serious trouble, but it was eventually overcome in a very thorough and effective manner. The priests killed off the unbelievers, generally by burning them alive.

This drastic treatment put a check upon thinking, and stopped the growth of the human mind for more than a thousand years.

Religion was booming from the fourth to the eighteenth century. It was a splendid business—

in fact, an ideal business. The priests were well paid, lived lives of luxury, and did not have to deliver the goods. The result was that the profession became overcrowded, and new means were invented to get more money out of the faithful. The invention of Purgatory and the sale of indulgences brought immense sums into the Church.

Historians tell us that between the fourth and eighteenth century more than a thousand millions of mankind lost their lives in Europe, Asia Minor, and Northern Africa on account of religion. This dreadful period of our history is now referred to as the Dark Ages.

Fortunately for man, the priests quarrelled among themselves, and this gave the human mind a chance to develop and get rid of some of the most bothersome superstitions. I have lately read an article on this subject which compares Christianity with the older religions of the world, and would have us believe that it is more worthy to endure, because it teaches loving-kindness.

Nothing could be farther from the truth than this ridiculous statement. Christianity has been, without doubt, the worst and the wickedest institution that ever afflicted a suffering world. It has destroyed vastly more lives, and caused infinitely more human suffering, than all the other religions that the world has ever known.

What Happens After Death?

While in Paris some years ago I had the honour of dining with one of the partners of Mr. Andrew Carnegie; Viva Kananda, the learned Hindu philosopher, was also one of the guests. A lady who was present asked him the question: "What becomes of us after death?" His reply was simple and to the point: "Madam, I do not know; I have never been dead." She said to me that one would have supposed that so learned a man with such a reputation would have been able to answer this simple question. I told her that any little ecclesiastical fledgeling or Salvation Army captain would have been able to give her a definite reply at once, but had the learned Hindu done the same she might have turned on him and asked: "How do you know?"

I proclaim myself the Pope of my own religion. This is a material world in which we live. All the matter that goes to make up our bodies, like all other matter, is eternal; it has always existed, and will always exist. Remove all matter from the universe and we should have only an infinitely cold and an infinitely dark vacuum. As far as the soul, the mind, or the spiritual part is concerned, this, like electricity, is only a condition of matter; it is not eternal in the same sense that matter is. It has been transmitted to us by our parents, and we, on our part, are able to transmit it to our children; so we live again in our descendants.

What Happens After Death?

The unfortunates of the race who fail to pass their soul on to the next generation are for ever lost; with them death indeed ends all. They will not live again in the minds or souls of descendants, neither will they descend into a fire and brimstone hell, simply because this ingenious invention of the priests, which has enabled the priests to live off the stupidly pious, has no real existence.

DEATH IS *NOT* THE END!

By Sir ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B., B.A., LL.D.

"THE nearer I approach death I seem to gain a glimpse of the shore and to be, at last, about to sail into harbour after a long voyage." Such was the reverie of Cicero, the great pagan philosopher, 2,000 years ago. And he went on to quote the following words of Cyrus the Elder on his death-bed: "Do not suppose, my dearest sons, that when I shall have left you I shall exist nowhere, or lose my being, for not even while I remained with you did you see my soul, yet you inferred from my own conduct that it was in the body; be assured, therefore, that its existence is all the same, even though you will continue not to see it."

Do not some of the contributions to this symposium compare very unfavourably with the thoughts and words of classic paganism? There are only two books from which we can learn anything respecting the future and the unseen—Nature and Revelation. And those grand men, the great philosophers of ancient paganism, attained to all that in this sphere Nature can

supply. But is this the limit of our knowledge in Christian England?

If all who are afflicted with blindness agreed to deny the existence of the sun, should we consent to treat its existence as an open question? And the denials of agnostics and infidels cannot be allowed to discredit our belief in the Bible as a Divine revelation. Nor can we forget the manner in which the revelation is accredited. "John Stuart Mill observed that mankind cannot be too often reminded that there was once a man of the name of Socrates. Still more important is it to remind mankind again and again that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst." These words are quoted from Dr. Harnack, the greatest of living rationalists; and they represent the sort of teaching that is common nowadays in many a *quasi*-Christian pulpit. But how different the faith of the Christian! "We know that the Son of God is come"; and the inspired record of His teaching is an end of controversy on every subject which falls within it. And this being so, we are not left to grope in darkness for a solution of the question, "What happens to us when we die?"

Beginning with the Latin Fathers, theologians have claimed to anticipate "the judgment of the great Assize" respecting the eternal destiny both of individuals and of races and classes of men. But what concerns us here is

the teaching, not of theology, but of the Son of God. And while the Bible is not designed to solve academic questions, its teaching is full and clear in respect of all that we are concerned to know. Within that category falls the question, "What happens to us when we die?" and the answer given to it is explicit. At death the righteous pass into a condition of conscious happiness, and the unrighteous of conscious misery.

Who is righteous, and who unrighteous? That is not the question now before us; and a discussion of it would be deemed unsuitable in the pages of this little book. But the fact that at death men do not pass out of existence, but into a new condition of existence, is accredited by Him Who is both the Saviour and the Judge, and Who declared expressly that all His teaching was Divine. The answer to our problem, therefore, is no matter of mere opinion or of guesswork. "God Who in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." This is no mere conjecture; "We know that the Son of God has come."

And He has drawn aside the veil which screened from human sight the world into which we pass at death. And it is not the "intermediate state" only that He has unveiled. For after declaring that now, and in this present

world, there is life for all who hear His voice, He adds, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Now here we are not dealing with theological doctrines of a kind that are a matter of controversy, but with basic truths plainly revealed by the Lord Himself. And this being so, any one who rejects them declares himself an infidel.

Such then is the answer which Christianity gives to the question here at issue. Death is not the end of human existence, but a crisis after which existence continues in a new phase. And that phase, moreover, is only temporary.

Scripture tells us something about the bodies in which the just will pass to glory; but as to the others it is strangely silent. As I have seen prisoners on their discharge from jail resuming the wretched garments they wore upon arrest, I have sometimes wondered whether the unjust will be reclothed in bodies akin to those in which they sinned. My purpose here, however, is not to indulge in idle speculations of any kind, but rather to indicate what Christianity plainly reveals upon the subject of this symposium.

NO ONE COMES BACK TO TELL

By JOHN BLOUNDELLE-BURTON

THE answer to the question is impossible. To state, however, what we hope, perhaps more than what we believe, is far easier, presuming that we are fully prepared to base our belief on the statements of the Bible, of which no one would desire to speak with doubt. We may say, in a word, that our universal belief—the belief we wish to hold—is the old assertion that those who have done well shall have "everlasting life," and that those who have done evil shall go into "everlasting fire." The last two words, however, are calculated to shake the belief of those who are most desirous to believe.

Let us regard this point, since it creates extreme difficulties. Whence came the belief that fire will be the punishment of those who, being dead, can feel nothing, or, being dead for myriads of years, can have left behind no grain capable of destruction? Consider the style of writing of those who may have promulgated such doctrines, and also whence they deduced them. Recent years, nay, recent days, have proved to us by discoveries made that human beings lived

at the time the world was undergoing strange changes; there was the glacial period, the fire period, and others.

Those human beings may have heard of both through early legends. Fire may have appeared to them the most awful of the two calamities; so would not fire have seemed to their crude, uninstructed, almost animal minds the most appalling horror that could fall on them? Might not hell, as we speak of it, viz., "everlasting fire," have struck them as the most terrible punishment that could befall the guilty? On the other hand, "everlasting life," to the Eastern mind, would depict—it does so to this day—calm and placid joys. It does so to the most devout of us, and depicts happiness such as we ourselves imagine Heaven to be, viz., the everlasting life in which we shall all share if we are of those who have done well.

Yet on this point, on which the most saintly as well as the most evil are still embarrassed, no information is forthcoming. No visitation of those we have loved dearly, of those who have been our friends, is ever vouchsafed; yet all of us aspire to learn something, to receive one word, one token that shall make things clear to us. We want absolute proof, tangible signs of what will happen when we have left this world, but no one comes back to tell us. We try to believe—the veriest atheist would believe and

respect if all could be made clear, made sure. There would be no sinners on this earth if they who are inclined to sin knew what their deserts would be; if they who now lead good and pure lives could know that their reward was certain.

The latter merit that knowledge because even the good would desire to be sure; the former would at once reform and indulge no more in scoffing and deriding a future life as that of a monk's or an old wife's tale. But no one comes back to tell us, and so, be we either good or bad, there lingers ever with us all the dread reflection that we have no actual knowledge of what happens to us when we die.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW

By Rev. DINSDALE T. YOUNG (President of the Wesleyan Conference)

IT is the pre-supposition of the Christian religion that we shall live again, and it seems to me that the whole appeal of Christianity must lose its reality unless founded upon the doctrine of a second life.

There is a story told of Lord Tennyson that he was discussing with Bishop Lightfoot one day the question of Christianity, and that they both emphatically declared that immortality was the fundamental matter in Christianity.

I believe that this is a conclusion from which there can be no reasonable appeal. The Bible, which we accept as our great spiritual authority, is pervaded with the doctrine of immortality. The Old Testament has many hints of it for students, though some doubting readers of to-day do not choose to admit their presence. As a matter of fact, however, I believe you will find that the doctrine of a future life is presented in the very first book of the Bible, and certainly in the case of some of the Old Testament writers

it was a conviction that had almost the sureness which might mark the Christian believer.

Then, when we come to the New Testament, in the remarkable words of St. Paul it is brought to light in the Gospel.

Our Lord Jesus Christ distinctly taught the doctrine that we shall live again; so did all the Apostles. Passage after passage might be cited from the New Testament books which clearly indicate this.

Then, again, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is to me the chief evidence of the life to come; and the Resurrection is an historical fact which is better attested than almost any other fact of history. Such is the verdict of scholars and historical students who have very carefully weighed all the evidence. Never before was there such good reason for accepting the resurrection of Christ as an historical fact as there is to-day.

Now, granted that Christ rose again from the dead, you have an indisputable demonstration of the fact that we shall live again. You sometimes hear people say that no one has ever come back from the world beyond to bear witness to its existence, but that suggestion is absolutely refuted by the resurrection of our Lord. No one can honestly or with any show of reason or accuracy declare that no one ever came back, for He came back. I put the resurrection of

Jesus Christ as the foundation evidence of the fact that we shall live again.

Then Nature appears to me to confirm that suggestion of a future life. Bishop Butler, in his great "Analogy," a work the main points of which never can be overthrown, has argued very powerfully that Nature abounds in hints and suggestions of the future life.

We see in human nature, in the nature of animals and in the vegetable world, startling illustrations which no thoughtful person can reject—wonderful hints of life under new conditions in another state.

Then another great evidence, as it seems to me, that we shall live again consists in our conscience. Now perhaps, next to the resurrection of our Lord, the ministry of conscience in every human being is the strongest indication of a life to come. Conscience distinctly preaches, to those who will listen, that there is another world. Conscience is constantly appealing to us on this point. People often stifle their conscience, and, as St. Paul put it, they "sear" their conscience so that it loses its power; but if it is not stifled or seared it bears an irresistible message of a future life. If people will only listen to their conscience as it speaks within them, it seems to me that they must be absolutely driven to believe that we shall all live again.

What Happens After Death?

The wonderful faculty which dwells in every human being is in truth a great prophet of the life beyond.

Another very striking suggestion that we shall live again is to be found in the all but universality of that conviction. Among all nations and in all times there has been a belief in immortality. Among heathen peoples the belief often assumes very grotesque forms, but it none the less exists! How can we account for the universal prevalence of the idea and its continual prevalence except by the supposition that it is an instinct implanted by our Maker in the human breast?

Another important consideration which has a very strong influence upon my own mind is the fact that a belief in immortality has always had such an ennobling influence wherever it has been accepted. No one ever taught more beautifully or more impressively than Tennyson did how the doctrine of immortality points to all that is moral and noble in human character.

Tennyson speaks in one of his poems of the great moral qualities, and he says something like this: "Take the charm 'for ever' from them, and they crumble into dust." I believe Tennyson's doctrine to be entirely true! Wherever the doctrine of a future life is received it is a check upon sin; there can be no doubt that the doctrine of immortality has been one of the

most powerful influences in leading men to accept the Saviour and to lead good lives.

On the other hand, wherever the doctrine is disbelieved you lose one of the greatest forces for all that is moral and spiritually good.

Finally, another consideration which seriously impresses me is this—that the very noblest intelligences and spirits in history have held the doctrine, and that a great deal of their nobleness is to be attributed to their having held it.

Not to go back to the earlier ages, think of the influence the belief in a future life has had on some of the master minds of modern times. Think of the fact that it was an intense reality to such men as Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, Bishop Westcott, Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson.

These men were enthusiasts for that doctrine, and if we look into the history of humanity we shall find, I think without exception, that all the very noblest personalities have retained this doctrine most definitely. The argument in favour of a belief in immortality based on the qualities of those who have held such a belief seems to me to be an argument which is unassailable, or, if not unassailable, at all events invincible.

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY—IS IT REASONABLE?

By J. ARTHUR HILL

In these days of widespread bereavement, and when the thoughts of even those who have lost no dear ones are turned to the graver things of life, it is natural that the question of Immortality should come very much to the front in many minds. The world-old query, more or less obscured in ordinary days, insistently presents itself: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Religion has always said "Yes"; Science—or some of its votaries, in the name of science—has sometimes said "No"; and the general mind has naturally been perplexed.

What is the state of affairs now—is there any nearer approach to agreement? Can we reach any firmer ground in this momentous matter? I say that undoubtedly we can; for a summing-up of Science and Philosophy at the present day is vastly more favourable to the religious view than ever before. Indeed, Science is now definitely on the side of Religion, and the average mind is no longer pulled two ways. We can be religious without being unscientific; we can be

scientific without being irreligious. And this is as it ought to be.

As a result, very largely, of investigations and general advance in certain branches of psychology during the last thirty years, the best scientific minds now take an entirely different view of the soul from that of the earlier scientists such as Büchner and Häckel.

The body is no longer looked on as *producing* the mind as the liver produces bile—in the materialist's famous and foolish phrase—but as *transmitting* it. The mind works through the body, but is in no way dependent on it for existence. The body is merely the vehicle or organ for the mind's manifestation in the present world. Naturally, if the material instrument gets damaged—as in apoplexy by a blood-clot on the brain—the mind's manifestation is interfered with: the mechanism is out of order, the current does not flow. But it is only a block, not an extinction—the mind is there all the same, as it is—equally really—in sleep, which is a similar, though in this case quite healthy, cessation of manifestation. And if the organ is smashed completely, as at death or soon afterwards, it makes no difference to the spirit. The latter simply withdraws when the body ceases to be usable for manifestation. It "goes up higher"; quits the material world, where it had lessons to learn but which has now served its

purpose; and turns to other and higher activities of a wider range, in the spiritual world—though not forgetting loved ones left behind, for there is good reason to believe, on purely scientific grounds, that the "dead" can still interest themselves in our affairs, that they often are still with us and aware of our thoughts and needs, and that they exert themselves to comfort and to help the sorrowing and burdened soul.

This "transmissive" view of the soul's relation to the body was held by the greatest psychologist of modern times—Professor William James, M.D., of Harvard—who expounded it only a few years ago, and not long before his lamented death, in his brilliant little book "Human Immortality," in the Ingersoll Lecture series. And it is held, on strictly scientific grounds, mark you—and as a result of his own investigations—by the most famous scientific man in England, who is at the same time probably the best-known scientist in the whole world to-day, namely, Sir Oliver Lodge. Other great names might easily be added: Sir William Crookes, President of the Royal Society; Sir William Barrett, the foremost scientist in Ireland; Professor Bergson, the greatest living philosopher, whether of France or the world; Mr. A. J. Balfour, Mr. G. W. Balfour, Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, leader of the Pragmatists in England—all these are names taken at random

from the large array of the foremost thinkers of our time who accept a doctrine of the soul which permits or definitely involves its independence of the body and its consequent survival of that body's death.

A further question here arises, as to whether "survival" is the same as "immortality." Strictly, it is not. The latter is usually understood to mean endless life as individuals, while survival of bodily death does not necessarily involve endlessness. It may be that after much growth and advance as individuals in the heavenly world, we sooner or later drop the limits and fetters of personality, achieving a more intimate union with the Divine, such as some mystics have attained even while on earth. This, or something like this, seems a reasonable supposition, for it is a commonplace of our experience that perfect happiness is most nearly attained by sacrifice of the self, by giving up our own wants and surrendering ourselves to God. "In His will is our peace," as Dante has it; and perhaps, when the spirit is purged and sufficiently worthy, it may really and truly enter into the joy of its Lord and be with Him in closest union. But it is likely that many stages of progress, as individuals, will precede that beatific culmination.

Another cheering thing about modern psychology is its new view of the structure, so to

speak, of human personality. We all are disgusted with ourselves at times, in our failure to live anywhere near up to the level of our own conceptions and ideals; and when we think of the survival, or immortality, or even the lengthy duration of our present self after death, we feel a certain shrinking. Shall we not get very sick of ourselves—shall we not weary of the eternal struggle against our baser part? As the boy said, quoted by Emerson: "It makes me so tired when I think of 'for ever.'"

But psychology here steps in to the rescue. It has established that our present self is only a fraction of our total self. As Wordsworth says: "We are greater than we know." We are like icebergs—in Sir Oliver Lodge's simile—which float with only one-twelfth of their bulk above water, this twelfth, more or less, representing our present consciousness.

So we need not indulge exaggerated fears about the tedium or stress of our own society in the heavenly world, for we shall be different from and larger than ourselves as known to us now. Identity will continue, as identity continues between the ignorant child and the mature wise man he develops into; but, as in the parallel, there will be a gain, an accretion, a growth, and we shall be changed. We do not yet know what we shall be—not exactly or by experience, which is yet to come in its due course

—but we know enough to infer that our transcendental self is really a much greater thing than the small and often very unsatisfactory self which is now being manifested here through the channel of the body. And with this scientifically justified inference we can look forward with contentment to the introduction to our wider self which awaits us at the time of transition. It was probably knowledge of this greater range of the real total personality that led to the phrase (quoted approvingly by Christ, but puzzling to many) "Ye are gods"—i.e. you are greater and more divine than you yourselves know (Psalm lxxxii. 6; St. John's Gospel x. 34).

It is sometimes asked: "Shall we know our friends when our turn comes to join them on the other side—will they not have changed, or shall we not ourselves have changed out of recognition in the interim, particularly if it has been long?"

The answer is that we shall know them, and shall be known, perfectly; if we think otherwise, or have doubts, it is because we are thinking how *bodily* changes make us unrecognisable sometimes, in our earth life, to friends of thirty or forty years ago.

But in the heavenly world recognition will not depend on material bodies; we shall put on spiritual bodies, as St. Paul says, and shall perceive each other's minds and souls much more

clearly than ever before—in other words, we shall not only know each other but shall know each other much better than we did in the earth life when clogged by the material body through which we saw only dimly.

And, as to changes, minds change less than bodies. We meet old friends, school chums and what not, after long separation, and at once the old intimacy is re-established.

I have just had a striking illustration of this. My dearest chum of twenty years ago has just revisited the Old Country after long sojourn in his adopted country—Canada, Pacific Coast. Little correspondence had passed between us after the first year or two, and I almost feared to meet him; for it seemed that we must inevitably have diverged as to our individual interests in life, our respective environments having been so different; and this feeling of strangeness, after the old times of affection and close sympathy, would be painful.

But when the meeting came all was well. My friend was the same good old fellow, the same personality that I had known, and in half an hour we felt as close as of old. True, each had much to tell the other, each had developed on different lines, but evidently the fact of our ancient congeniality had ensured that any further growth of the one would be of a kind which would interest and attract the other. The

personality is the thing; its knowledge or experience is but a garment. So with after-death recognitions. We need not fear that we shall not know our dear ones, or that they will have left us hopelessly behind. They will have much to tell us, and there will be much comparing of notes; but the mutual recognition of the selves will be full and intimate and happy. Indeed it may be—nay, it will be—that we shall be in some sort necessary to their joy; "that they without us should not be made perfect."

Therefore in these world-shaking times let us hold to cheerfulness and faith. God is over all; the present life is but a dream, a discipline, an education. It is better on before, when we shall have awakened to the wider horizons that await us—to the fuller life and activities, to the companionship of those we have loved and temporarily lost, and to the closer union with God, who is Love itself.

THE THEOSOPHIC VIEW

By Mrs. ANNIE BESANT

ANSWERS to this question have been sought for by man along various roads, and the answers may be classified as religious, spiritualistic, theosophic, and materialistic.

The last may be summed up in the statement that nothing happens to us, because we cease to exist when the body dies. The religious answers are various, but all unite in the belief that we continue to live beyond death.

The spiritualistic answers agree as to the revival of the individual after the death of the body, and a mass of evidence is proffered, which, in the opinion of all who have carefully studied it, places the fact of revival beyond dispute. When every possible deduction has been made for fraud, hallucination, self-deception, there remains an irreducible minimum of evidence, which is sufficient to prove that the man survives on the other side of death. The evidence, as is well known, is obtained through the class of sensitives known as "mediums," and is of the most varied kinds—writing, speaking, materialising, under trance conditions or otherwise.

What Happens After Death?

The answers given by theosophists depend on investigations carried on by means of the exercise of super-normal senses, sometimes born with the person using them, sometimes developed by deliberate effort.

The theory as to these senses is easily stated. Man is a spiritual intelligence clothed in matter. This matter exists in our worlds in five main states, differing from each other by the fundamental types of their atoms, the aggregations of which form the materials of which each world is composed.

For our purpose we may ignore the two higher worlds, and consider only the three lower, in which the normal evolution of man is going on. These are: the physical world, from which are drawn the materials forming our physical bodies; the intermediate world, generally called the astral world, from which are drawn the materials forming the astral body, the seat of sensations, desires, and emotions; the heavenly, or mental world, from which are drawn the materials forming the mental body, the seat of thought.

The man himself, the spiritual intelligence, the conscious being, uses these bodies of his for thinking, feeling, and action in relation to the worlds in which he lives and moves, and in his normal everyday consciousness he is active in these three worlds, working from the

mental world through the cerebro-spinal system in the physical body, and from the astral world through the sympathetic system, the physical body being the apparatus, the mechanism, through which the forces of thought or of desire are able to manifest themselves in the physical world.

As Sir Oliver Lodge has pointed out, only a part of man's consciousness works in the physical body, but that part shows the three-fold characteristics of the whole—thinking, desiring, acting.

The greater part of man's consciousness, according to this view, is outside man's physical body, and can manifest itself through the medium of the astral and mental bodies in the astral and mental worlds. In "waking consciousness" the activity is shown through the physical body; but man is not "awake" all the time.

Consciousness is active when the body sleeps, and psychologists recognise and have investigated the "dream-consciousness," and by the study of dreams, of trance-conditions, hypnotic and mesmeric, they have accumulated a number of facts which show that when the senses are deadened and the brain is inactive, the consciousness manifests certain powers more extensive than it can show during the use of its ordinary physical apparatus. These powers are

manifested by the consciousness through the lesser dense medium of astral matter, the matter of the "intermediate world," in which consciousness performs functions actively when the body is asleep.

To put it in other words, the consciousness which works in the waking body is largely withdrawn from the body when it sleeps, and consciousness is less impeded in the exercise of its powers when it is working outside the dense and comparatively sluggish matter of the physical body.

In certain conditions of very deep trance the consciousness is almost withdrawn from the astral as well as from the physical body, and then it works in still rarer regions, and we have the visions of saints, of great seers like Swedenborg, etc.

Now, physical, astral, and mental bodies have all organs of perception, by which consciousness perceives the corresponding external worlds. The senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch are such, bringing the external world into relation with human consciousness.

According to theosophical teachings, the astral and mental bodies have also their organs of perception, bringing the worlds from which their materials are drawn into relation with human consciousness. Hence, observation of the phenomena of the astral and heavenly worlds

is possible for all those who have in the course of their evolution, whether normally or by any quickening process, brought into functional activity these perceptive organs.

It is on observation carried on by means of these that theosophists depend for their knowledge of after-death states. An increasing number of students are able to carry on such observations, and the records of these are accumulating.

The conditions of the world in which our consciousness works when outside the physical body—whether leaving that body in sleep or dead—are as various as those of the physical world, and the observations of students must vary according to the regions they investigate. But certain broad facts emerge.

The man after death, in his desires and emotions, is the same man as he was before death; hence, if his desires were such as need a physical body for their satisfaction, he suffers keenly from unsatisfied cravings, which only gradually disappear by a process of slow starvation; the application of this knowledge to conduct leads a man to lessen such desires, and to seek gratification rather in the class of desires which pertain to emotions than in those which pertain to appetites. Æsthetic emotions, the pursuit of knowledge, persist for the functioning of consciousness in the astral or intermediate

world, and help can be sent thence, by the wireless telegraphy of thought and emotion, to those who are still labouring in the physical world.

Many an experience of happiness and of suffering, as the results of the physical earth-life, are engraven by the consciousness on the tablets of the spirit's memory, and appear as "conscience" in a subsequent life, as the impulse to do the right or to abstain from the wrong.

When the experiences of these results are all assimilated and recorded in memory, the man passes on into the heavenly world, and there transmutes into faculty all mental and emotional experiences of a pure and useful nature. The work of the consciousness in the heaven-world is this assimilation and transmutation of experiences, and when all these are thus changed the result passes on into the spiritual consciousness of the man himself, who retains the memory of all the experiences; but when he puts forth a part of his consciousness again to gather new food of experience in the lower worlds, he implants in the new materials he gathers round him only the *results* of past experiences as *faculties,* not the *facts* of the experiences as *memories.* The memories reside in the spiritual consciousness, not in the part which is embodied as mind, emotion, and activity.

Our work, then, on the other side of death is the building of conscience and of faculty out of the experiences gathered during physical life. With these we return to a new earth-life, to make further progress. Edward Carpenter wrote truly: "Every pain that I suffered in one body was a power which I wielded in the next." By this process is evolution carried on, and we pass out of weakness into strength, out of ignorance into knowledge.

I have not touched here, in this dry record of observed facts, on the joys of the larger life, the loves which pass unbroken through death, the glad companionships which irradiate immortal life with beauty and with happiness. Our future is in our own hands, for the Spirit, who is Man, is the Inner Ruler Immortal; we create our future by our present, for we live in a world of law, and for him who lives nobly Death is but the entrance into a larger consciousness, a fuller life.

CAN CONVERSE BE HELD WITH THE SPIRITS OF FRIENDS?

By GEORGE E. WINTER

IF Shakespeare was right when he spoke of the next world as "That undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns," then it would be impossible to answer the momentous question, "What happens to us when we die?" We should be cut off from both sources of knowledge. We should neither know of our own experience nor from the experience of others; we should be thrown back upon mere theorising and speculation.

Fortunately, there is overwhelming evidence that Shakespeare was wrong when he put in the mouth of Hamlet the dogmatic assertion that no traveller returns. There is now an ever-increasing body of expert investigators who point to a quite opposite conclusion. Not only do the dead return, but they endeavour to give us some sort of notion of the life led by the spirit when it has thrown off the encumbrance of the flesh.

The evidence comes in the most convincing form through the phenomena of what is called

trance-mediumship. As the name suggests, a "medium" is one whose organism may be used as a bridge between this world and the next. In some as yet unexplained way the bodies of those possessing this extraordinary faculty may be utilised by spirits who wish to communicate with those who are still in the flesh. The medium loses consciousness—passes into a trance—and during this temporary oblivion the body, with its nervous organisation, is more or less successfully controlled by the spirit operator.

The nature of the evidence, and the reasons for believing that the communications received in this way do actually come from the spirits of the deceased persons who claim to control the medium, cannot be detailed here. It must suffice to say that those who have had the largest experience of these amazing phenomena remained convinced that they have held converse with the spirits of friends and relatives long since consigned to the grave.

Now if you were quite certain that you were talking to the spirit of one whom you knew and loved on the earth, what would be the first questions that would rise to your lips?

Naturally you would ask: Are you happy? Do you suffer pain, or are you free from the innumerable ills that human flesh is heir to? Do you remember your old earth life? Have you a body, and do the old loves and desires

of the flesh still possess you? What do you *do* in your new life? What sort of a world are you in? How do you pass your time?

These are some of the inevitable questions that would rush into your mind once you had realised that you were enjoying the awful privilege of converse with one who was dead. The silence of the grave once broken you would be filled with an invincible desire to know the nature of the fate that awaits all mankind.

It is scarcely necessary to say that such questions have been asked again and again, and if the answers are not always in that definite form which the questioner so eagerly desires, explanations are not far to seek.

In the first place, it is naturally impossible to obtain any proper conception of a supersensible world in terms of the sensible. When spirits undertake to explain to us the nature of the next life, and what goes on there, they have no language with which to express their thoughts, and we can never get a clear idea of what their world may be like. It is as though an explorer were attempting to describe a new country in which everything is so different from the old world that no comparisons are possible.

If we try to picture to ourselves the existence that awaits each one of us on the death of the body, we are chilled by the thought that life in that other world must be shadowy and unsub-

stantial. We imagine ourselves as formless ghosts leading a dreary, dream-like existence, cut off from the sunshine and reality of the tangible earth.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. "The spirit body is as actual and real to the spirit," says one communicator, "as the old earth body appeared to me, and its environments are as palpable to its perceptions—it has simply passed from one plane of conscious existence to another." The invisible has become visible, and the formerly visible things invisible.

Most people, it is affirmed, find the transition and the awakening on the other side more natural than they had expected, and they soon become aware that they are in a real world among real people, and are as much alive as ever they were on earth. As one spirit expressed it: it was like waking in a strange bedroom when on a holiday.

It is obvious, therefore, that there is no drastic change in the personality brought about by the shedding of the physical body. The old personality survives with all its characteristic memories, its individual peculiarities, its loves and hates—even its prejudices. There is no sudden illumination, no instantaneous conversion of erring, sinful men and women into angels of light. The spirit commences its new life in another world just as it left off here—no

better and no wiser. We pick up the thread where it dropped from our nerveless hand when we were surprised by the King of Terrors.

But the loss of the body! Surely that makes a profound difference?

One can well imagine that it is no great hardship to many who have found their fleshly tenement a prison-house of pain and suffering. To those who dragged through life the heavy load of a diseased or defective organism, the shedding of their burden of flesh can only be a subject for thankfulness and rejoicing. To all it will be a gain. For if we are to believe the assurances of those who have passed through the great experience, we shall find the ethereal body an infinitely free and more perfect medium of expression than the body of flesh.

The question is often asked: Do the spirits of the dead know what is taking place on the earth? Can the father, for example, who has left wife and children unprovided for, view from another sphere the hopeless struggles and sufferings of those he has left behind?

If this be so, then whatever advantages an ethereal body may confer, whatever compensations may fall to the lot of the spirit, the condition of a vast number of sensitive souls must be one of poignant anguish at seeing the sorrow of those they love and in being able to do nothing to assuage it.

We are assured, however, that spirits are no more conscious of our presence than we are of theirs. The loss of the five senses closes every avenue leading to the material world. Only on rare occasions can the veil separating the two states of existence be torn aside by those possessing the mediumistic faculty.

It is true that memory still continues. May not the uncertainty of the fate of those left behind become a source of torture to spirits separated from their loved ones by an impassable barrier?

Well, it is never contended that the conditions in spirit life are those of undiluted bliss. The spirit must progress, and progress is not accomplished without effort and suffering. Those who have left many duties undone, those who have led lives of selfish indulgence, without a thought for the sufferings around them, will doubtless have to endure the sting of remorse for opportunities neglected.

Would we have it otherwise?

But sooner or later all will awake to the great spiritual realities which bring happiness and peace. The consciousness of imperfection and unhappiness leads to repentance and aspiration, and the upward path opens before the spirit which truly desires to walk the better way.

Surely this is a higher and more inspiring gospel than the old theological dogma of an

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everlasting hell of flames and torment to which the majority of mankind will be assigned. It is a doctrine in accordance with the highest philosophical and religious truth, and is precisely the kind of revelation we should expect from a traveller returned from that "dim bourne" towards which we all have our faces set.

WE CANNOT COME TO AN END

By A. C. BENSON, C.V.O., M.A.

THE question of our immortality is far too wide and intricate for me to enter upon an argument or discussion about it here. The proof is cumulative, and contains a large subjective element. I can here only summarise my own belief, drawn from experience as interpreted by reason.

My own belief is that life is a force, coming out of the Mind and Essence of God, for ever trying, for reasons unknown to us, to express itself in matter.

I believe it to be as indestructible as matter; at least, I can conceive of no process by which life or matter can either be originated or brought to an end.

I therefore believe in a subsequent life, just as I believe in a previous life—but under what conditions I cannot say. But I do not believe that personality depends on *memory*—it is rather a matter of quality and temperament; and thus the fact that our memory does not seem to extend beyond one life is no disproof of pre-existence.

IS THERE AN INTERMEDIATE STATE?

By the Rev. BENJAMIN BELL, B.D., Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England

THE subject is certainly one of solemn and perennial interest, and it cannot be long absent from the minds of most readers in these days of national anxiety and war, when death may be very near to our dear ones or ourselves.

I write from the standpoint of a Christian who believes in the supreme authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ on all such questions, and recognises the testimony of the New Testament as our only sure guide to truth through His Holy Spirit.

Those seventeenth century divines who framed the standards of the Presbyterian Churches of Great Britain and America, like most of the Reformers who preceded them, were led to reject entirely the idea of an *intermediate state* of either weal or woe into which souls pass at death. This was natural enough as a protest against the fantastic system of purgatory, but it led them further, in my opinion, than New Testament Scripture sanctions. When Our

Lord assured the penitent thief on the cross: "This day shalt thou be with Me in *Paradise,*" He chose a word familiar to the Hebrew teaching of His day, but which we have no right confidently to identify with Heaven, His Father's House, especially as St. Paul uses the same word in his account of the man in Christ (almost certainly himself), "who was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words."

Further, as all readers of the Revised Version know, the Greek word *Hades,* like the corresponding Hebrew term *Sheol,* is used in the New Testament as the place of departed souls generally, whether they are in peace or woe. For myself I believe that Our Lord went into Hades between His death and resurrection, and perhaps preached His Gospel there as the passage in 1. Peter seems to tell us, "to the spirits in keeping, who once were disobedient."

Our Lord and His Apostles represent the death of Christians as a "falling asleep." But that is not inconsistent with the belief that they awake again immediately into a happy conscious life. Indeed, some of us have had the joy of seeing the face of our friends light up with a glad surprise just before death, and have heard them addressing by name dear ones who have already passed behind the veil as if they saw them.

In Our Lord's parable of Dives and Lazarus,

"Abraham's bosom" represents, I think, the blessed side of the intermediate state, and the "Hades" where the rich man lay, the abode of the selfish, God-forgetting man. It is not possible, according to the parable, for any to pass from the one side to the other, but that does not prove that when the day of final judgment comes, there may not be hope for such as Dives. Yet we must recognise that Our Lord was wont to speak with sad severity of the future of those who refuse to believe and follow Him here and now.

In that intermediate state it seems probable that there will be some form of *embodiment*, sufficient to allow of intercourse, and thus to facilitate growth in holiness.

One is often called to speak to and pray with dying persons who have neglected the call of Christ throughout life, and earnestly ask for guidance at its close. Occasionally one has seen what appeared to be true penitence and eager faith in such persons. Is it not more likely, and more according to God's methods of dealing with us in this life, that such new-born souls should pass at death into a place of *training* for Heaven, than into Heaven itself?

Again, I have known many Christian men and women taken away suddenly from this world in their early prime, when they had just entered or were in the very midst of highly

useful service of their fellows—men and women singularly fitted to commend religion to others by their example and their words.

Does it not help us to say "Amen" to such mysterious withdrawals of the very choicest instruments of Christian blessing, to think that they may be needed even more elsewhere, in co-operating with their Divine Lord in the upholding in faith and holiness of those who passed out of this world in the early stages of the new life?

THE TRIUMPH OF SELF

By FLORA ANNIE STEEL, the Well-known Novelist

"WHAT value, what interest, can an immortality have for me," asks Dr. Max Nordau, "in which I should no longer love what I have loved, no longer hate what I have hated, no longer remember my past life, with all its small and great adventures, joys, sorrows, ambitions, etc. etc.?"

What value indeed? None to one so strictly limited by human personality as Dr. Nordau seems to be. But there are other thinkers who, thank Heaven, have learnt a deeper wisdom; others who have spoken of the "self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than Heaven. A self that encircles all, bright, incorporeal, scathless, pure, untouched by evil." And, of a truth, he who beholds all things in this self, and this self in all things, never turns away from it. Sorrow, joy, even death are left far behind.

Mystical as this may sound, to me, at any rate, it is more satisfactory than Dr. Nordau's alternatives. Personally, I should be terribly bored by the memory of mundane loves and hates through all eternity. Those who cling to

this memory seem to forget that love is not always a "grande passion," and that hate is often despicable. But if they mean that *only those things that are honest and of good repute* will survive, I am with them, with this difference —that I hold humanity will disappear altogether, in so far as it is frail.

Then nothingness is inconceivable. It is one of the unthinkables of life. So far as our two-foot rule enables us to judge, nothing that has been can ever cease to be.

As for the question of an immortal personality, verily there is one for those who recognise in this life that they are but part of a great whole.

WHAT IS IT THAT SURVIVES?

By LADY GROVE

WHEN so many learned divines and distinguished philosophers have written on the subject of what happens to the human personality after death, I can hardly think that my opinion, even if I had one—which I have not—can be of great value. What I do think, however, is that it is futile to inquire into the unknowable, and also that, as each individual varies during his lifetime to such an extent as hardly to retain the same individuality manifested at one time or other of his existence, it may be worth while to inquire *what* it is that is supposed to survive after death of all the complex phases and characteristics and characters even that go to make up one single human organism.

THE SIMPLEST FAITHS ARE BEST

By LEE DANVERS

To construct is always better than to destroy, to build up better than to pull down; therefore, the simple, unquestioning faith of the Christian in a life after death must obviously be finer than the complicated reasoning of the scientist and the discontented questioning of the unbeliever. For Christianity constructs a Hereafter, whereas most of the scientists and all of the unbelievers do their best to demolish the Christian idea of a Hereafter without seeking to supply any substitute.

What happens to us when we die? According to the Christians we live again; according to the unbeliever we do not live again; according to the scientist it is impossible that we should live again, except as part of the impersonal force which they call "matter." The Christian used to believe in a life after death that should consist of becoming an ethereal creature with wings on one's shoulders and a harp in one's hands, and eternity was pictured very largely as an eternity of music. Such a belief is grotesquely absurd according to the

scientist and the unbeliever, but, at least, it is more attractive than a belief in nothingness or nothing in particular after death.

The Christian has virtually ceased nowadays to believe that he will become an angel and spend the timeless space of the everlasting in singing. The parsons have listened uneasily to the voice of science, they have tried to accommodate religion to the discoveries of men, and they have ceased to preach a wonderful gospel in a simple way. But religion has not gained anything by its adaptation to the scientific thought of the twentieth century. It seems quite reasonable to suppose that we shall not become angels when we die; indeed, it seems reasonable to suppose that there never was such a being as an angel, but, all the same, angels serve a very useful purpose, if not as facts at least as figures.

A disembodied spirit could not possibly wear wings on its shoulders, since it would have no shoulders, but the wings are excellent as a symbol. A disembodied spirit could not hold a harp, let alone play on it, since it would have no hands or fingers, but the celestial harp is quite a beautiful image. One cannot, in any practical way, think of eternal music, but, then, one cannot think, in any practical way, of death once the earth has been filled in about a grave, because the rest is mystery. Yet music, because it stirs our deepest emotions and creates long-

ings which we cannot understand, is a perfect means of expressing the inexplicable mystery of eternity.

The wings and the harp and the music are held nowadays to be the childish figments of childlike minds, and the ministers of the gospel have agreed to banish them from their talk of an after-life out of deference to the fact that humanity has, so to speak, grown up. But those things ought not to be banished; we need them.

In the face of eternity we are as much children to-day as when the world began. We have grown accustomed to the system that governs the universe, we have given commonplace names to things we do not understand, and deceived ourselves, with the names, into the belief that we understand them. But our vaunted knowledge of the universe is purely a superficial knowledge. We know that the earth revolves on its own axis. Do we know why it revolves? We say that the sun is so many miles from the earth. Do we know any more than Adam knew how it came there, and why it stays immovable in space? We are children in these matters—children who have adopted an air of grown-up wisdom. And because the sun shone through all the yesterdays we call it reasonable to expect that it will shine to-morrow, whereas, in truth, there is no reason in it, but only natural human

expectation. Similarly, we dare to "reason" about death, which, of itself, has never given us any sort of human expectation.

Reason is a useful thing to apply to the commonplace incidents of everyday life, but death is utterly beyond the domain of reason; therefore, we cannot reason about it. We can only have faith, or be lacking in faith, concerning what it conceals. We can speculate concerning its meaning, or we can decide to leave it out of our thoughts, but we cannot argue about it and prove our arguments right before we ourselves die. No. So far as death is concerned, we are still children, and therefore we should do better to cling to childish symbols than to throw them scornfully away.

Wings are suggestive of a state superior to the human state; harps are suggestive of happiness transcending all known forms of human happiness; music is suggestive of an utterly different condition of existence to the conditions of our present existence. In a literal sense they may seem absurd as heirlooms of death, but in a symbolic sense they stand for a higher, finer existence than earthly life; why, then, should we not cling to them?

It may be true, as some would have us believe, that there is no future life for any of us; that when we die nothing happens except the thing which is obvious to us all—the decom-

position of our bodies; but, at least, it is no more "reasonable" to think that death means nothingness than to think that death means a spiritual world of infinite grandeur, infinite happiness, for all who strive to deserve it. And it is vastly less satisfactory. The doctrine that when we are dead we are dead for all time is not a doctrine that helps; on the contrary, it is one that discourages goodness, encourages lawlessness; it is one that favours a pitiful state of existence in this world because it denudes us of all incentive to live well.

If everyone believed that death meant utter annihilation the world would promptly become a place of unspeakable horror. It is all very well to argue that many people would live honestly, soberly, and decently, that they would do right for the mere sake of doing right; but we all know well enough that the majority would do wrong, for the simple reason that it is so very much easier to do wrong than to do right. Let us not deceive ourselves. It is the simple faith of the bulk of mankind in a life after death of infinite possibilities that prevents the world from becoming a hell of madness, murder, and debauchery.

If the scientists and the unbelievers had their way they would destroy this faith, giving us no other faith in its stead—and there would be nothing left to live for. But just as it is im-

possible for any rational being to disbelieve in God, so it is impossible for any sensible being to disbelieve in a Hereafter. There could not be a world without a God, let alone a million worlds, and there could not be death without a future state. Do you suppose that God would have put the craving—the need—for a future life in our souls if there were, in fact, no future life for us?

But, the "reasoning" man may argue, how can there be a future life for us if we know nothing about it? The only necessary answer lies, I think, in another question: How could we be content with this life if we knew that it were temporarily withholding us from a far more perfect life? We do not know exactly what happens to us when we die, because it is not good for us to know; but in every human soul has been implanted a yearning for *something* after death—for a light beyond the veil of darkness—and that yearning is so strong, so universal, that it must necessarily make even the most matter-of-fact scientific man pause at times, though it were idle to expect him to confess such a thing to his fellow-creatures.

A belief that death is the end of all things is as impossible as a belief that there is no God. The atheist declares that there is no God, but the real truth is that there is no atheist. There are professed atheists, just as there are pro-

fessed Christians, but there is no genuine atheist. There is no man or woman on the face of the earth who does not believe in the existence of an omnipotent God. Atheism is nothing more than a wanton, impotent bravado. It is a sheer impossibility for anyone to live and disbelieve in an Almighty, no matter what name you may bestow upon Him.

And so we come back to the wings and the harps and the music, for these are the symbols of simple faith, and simple faith is best. Christianity may be assailed, but it has endured and spread these nineteen hundred years. The Bible may be full of faults and contradictions, but it has been the biggest power in the world for many centuries. The man who believes in God, in Christ, and in the Bible, may be able to produce but little evidence in support of his beliefs satisfactory to men of science and infidels, but the fact that he is happier than the man who does not believe in God, or Christ, or the Bible, is more than sufficient justification for all who are prepared to accept mysteries as mysteries and not as myths.

We are children, and as children we must accept the big but hidden truths of life and death, believing of them what it is best for us to believe. The Christian religion teaches that death is but a dark passageway to a brighter world. There could not be a more attractive

teaching than that; why, then, should any of us feel inclined to turn from it to gloomier teachings? Because reason urges us?

Decidedly not, for what, after all, *is* reason but the working of a mind in a sensible way when dealing with known things or things arising out of known circumstances; and how can it proceed in a sensible way from known things to unknown things? Why, not even death itself appears to be reasonable. Some of our cleverest men are cut off at the moment of their existence when they would be of the greatest possible profit to the world. If reason cannot explain why this should happen, how can reason explain what does or does not happen to these men after they have been cut off?

The simplest faiths are best, not merely because they are simple, but because they are comforting and ennobling. They help, whereas lack of faith hinders. Far better, surely, to die confident of life to come than to die in despair. And far better than all the arguments in favour of nothingness after death must be the symbols of the wings and the harps and the music, since they serve to uplift mankind rather than to crush mankind down.

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